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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All MA Licensed Ambulance Services  
**FROM:** Abdullah Rehayem, Acting Director, DPH/OEMS  
James Lake, Programs Director, SETB  
**RE:** Language Interpretive Services for Emergency Calls Available to EMTs,  
Dispatchers and Call Takers  
**DATE:** June 27, 2006

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This is to inform you of an important new real-time interpreter service that may be available to you and your EMTs for free when at the scene of **emergency 9-1-1 calls** in which the patient, or person on scene with the patient, does not speak English.

Recently, the Statewide Emergency Telecommunications Board (SETB) entered into a contract with Qwest/NetworkOmni to provide language interpretive services for Massachusetts primary Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). These language interpretive services are funded through wire-line and wireless Enhanced 9-1-1 revenues and will be free of charge to PSAPs; this will allow for large discounts to the Commonwealth based on the high statewide call volume. This service is also available free of charge for EMTs **on scene at emergency 9-1-1 calls**.

To access the service, EMTs can call the applicable PSAP via their 2-way emergency line, and tell the call taker they have a patient, or person speaking on behalf of the patient, who does not speak English. If the EMT or call taker can identify the foreign language, the call taker will connect the EMT to the appropriate language Qwest interpreter. If not, the EMT will be connected to Qwest to identify the language. Qwest has interpreters for 150 languages. Because the program is designed for emergency personnel use, it is meant to make these interpreters available in real time. Typically, the connection with the interpreter is made in less than 1 minute, for more common foreign languages, and 2-3 minutes for less common foreign languages.

Please contact your local PSAPs to develop procedures on how to begin accessing this interpreter service. This service may only be used for calls received on 9-1-1 position equipment (i.e., 9-1-1, Two-Way and One-Way lines), and may only be used from the scene, not while en route. It may not be used for calls received on an agency's phone lines. Services that wish to purchase services off this contract (statewide contract #ITT09) for calls other than 9-1-1 use may do so by contacting Julie Erickson at Qwest, 781-213-5543.

If you have further questions, please contact Noelle Merchant, SETB Public Education Coordinator, at 508-828-2911.